

Gliding — fun sport for father-son team

Five of the world's best glider pilots, including Rudy and Herb Mozer of Bloomfield Hills, have been selected to compete in the seventh annual Smirnoff Sailplane Derby, racing May 2 from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C.

The 2,900 mile-long contest is America's only transcontinental air race and the world's longest glider competition.

Herb Mozer, 22, is the current U.S. standard class champ. His father, Rudy, 48, is a highly-seeded competition pilot.

Competing sailplanes will be towed aloft daily by powered aircraft to an altitude of 2,000 feet before being released. They will rely on thermal updrafts to gain altitude and remain airborne. Daily legs of the Smirnoff event will average 250 miles.

The course begins in Los Angeles and includes stops at Phoenix, Las Cruces, N. M.; Odessa, Tex.; Dallas, Tex.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Springfield, Mo.; St. Louis, Mo.; Chi-

cago, Ill.; Columbus, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Penn.; Frederick, Md.; and Washington D.C.'s Dulles International Airport.

Scoring in the Smirnoff Sailplane Derby is based on speed and distance flown on each leg. Points will be awarded each contest day on a descending scale with the top performance receiving 1000 points. The best cumulative score wins.

The winner will receive a gold medal and the runners-up take home silver medals.

Rice grad aids Titans

Sophomore utility man Larry Clarke, a graduate of Birmingham Brother Rice, rated fifth among hitters in the recent University of Detroit's spring Florida baseball tour.

The backup first baseman and designated hitter batted .313, collecting five hits in 16 times at the plate. Clarke drove in three runs and had two hits

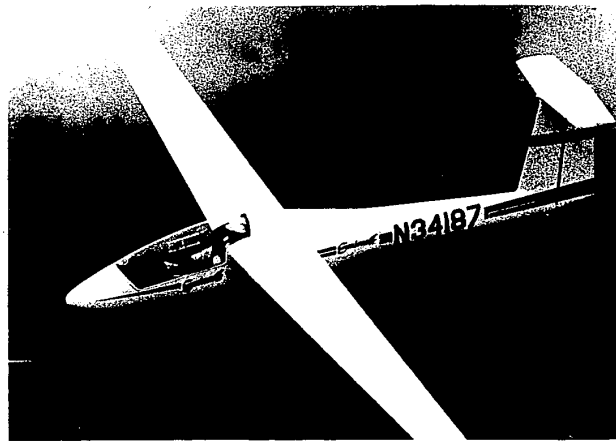
The sponsor of the race, Smirnoff, donates \$5000 annually to the Soaring Society of America's world team fund. The SSA sanctions the derby event.

One headliner featured in the 1978 Smirnoff is current world sailplane champion Ingo Renner, 28, of Australia, who won the 1977 Smirnoff Derby with 9685 out of a possible 10,000 points. Also racing is 53-year-old Wally Scott of Odessa, Tex., winner of the inaugural races in 1972 and the fifth annual contest in 1976.

each against the University of Tampa and Salem College (Ore.).

Clarke was flawless for the Titans in the field handling 27 chances at first base without an error. He was credited with 23 putouts.

The Brother Rice grad recorded a .333 slugging percentage in Detroit's 6-6 overall Florida showing.



The Mozer father and son team will be flying sleek, unpowered aircraft like this in the Smirnoff Sailplane Derby.

Baseball teams ready for season

By TOM BAER

The high school baseball players in this area must be wondering what they've done to offend Mother Nature. Warmer weather has been promised for this week, but the preceding days have been generally cold, wet and nasty — and most prep baseball coaches have had to train their teams in the gym days longer than in past springs.

"We don't have any choice," said Southfield-Lathrup coach Bob Marten, whose outfielders shag fly balls in the parking lot on the rare occasions when they get outside. "Our infield still has snow on it, and our outfield is covered with water."

Coaches at Southfield High and Southfield Christian are also fed up with preparing for an outdoor sport indoors.

"It puts you behind, but I guess just about every team is in the same boat," said Southfield coach Calvin Fletcher. "We have a pitching machine and a batting cage in the gym, but there are some things you just can't work on indoors."

Weather permitting, Southfield Christian will open its season this Friday at home against Grass Lake.

Lathrup and Southfield will have a few extra days to let things dry out and warm up. Southfield opens next Saturday, April 13, with a double header at Oak Park High. Lathrup starts two weeks from today (April 17) at home against Ferndale High.

SOUTHFIELD FINISHED last season with a 13-11 overall record. The Blue Jays went 4-10 in the rugged Southeastern Michigan Association, tied for fifth place with Ferndale.

Of the five key returnees at Southfield, the most promising is senior Dane Smith, a right-handed "ace-type" chucker in Fletcher's words. Last season, Smith had an unimpressive 3-5

pitching record, but he looked good in Connie Mack ball over the summer.

"Dane has always had a good fastball, and this spring we've been working on his curveball," Fletcher said. "It's coming along nicely. We expect a good year from him."

Fletcher has three other pitchers in senior Tom Williams, who transferred from Catholic Central, junior Tony Statin and sophomore Joey Moses. Senior Blaine Gatti, who quarterbacked the school's football team, can also pitch, but is more valuable at shortstop.

Another Blue Jay key will be senior Mark Stenius, the designated hitter, who led the team with a .308 average last year. Junior Mike McCann and senior Daryl Derner are in contention for the catcher's spot. Eric Schwartz and Dan Ret, both seniors, got experience last year.

Southfield, which was hurting defensively last season, has twopromising junior infielders in Jeff Deitch and John Manduzzo. "We seem to be improved defensively," Fletcher said. "Poor defense really killed us last year. We just gave up too many runs on errors. But having Gatti at short should make things better, and we seem to be more solid in the outfield, too."

SOUTHFIELD BEGINS its SMA season April 19 at home against defending-champion Royal Oak Kimball. Kimball and Hazel Park look good, according to Fletcher.

"Based on returning lettermen, Hazel Park should be tough," he said. "They have four real solid pitchers, plus two over .300 hitters from last year."

At Lathrup, Marten has six players back from last season's team, which compiled a 5-16 overall record to go with a 4-8 mark in the Metro Suburban Association. Lathrup tied for fourth

with Royal Oak Dondoro in the final MSA standings.

Jim Wissing, a senior first baseman, was named to the all-conference team last year, and led the team in batting with a .387 mark. Seniors Kal Najar and Steve Mardidan had experience from last year.

Marten is long on pitchers with seniors Joey Silver (12 last year with a .350 batting average), Andy Coden (11) and Hugh Bayer (12). Some other Lathrup arms: Juniors Jack Dakestan, Scott Start, Mike Lowman and Randy Spitzer.

"Pitching will be our strong suit," Marten said. "We have three good ones coming back. And we'll be strong in the infield, too, and that'll be an improvement. Shoddy defense is what killed us last year. We made 72 errors."

MARTEN IS HIGH on sophomore catcher Ron Curcio. "I don't know if he can hit, but he has a very strong arm and he's a good defensive catcher," the coach said.

Birmingham Groves, the defending baseball champion in the MSA, graduated some good players and probably won't repeat, coaches said. Lathrup opens its MSA season on April 21 at home against Troy Athens.

"Rochester Adams had an undefeated junior varsity team last year.

so I think they'll be the team to watch in the league this season," Marten said.

Southfield Christian, a Class D school, posted a 9-16 record last year.

"We should have a good hitting team based on what I've seen in our indoor drills with the pitching machine," said Christian coach Bob Newman. "We have five sophomore lettermen back from last year. They're all stronger now, and they've picked up a lot of baseball sense."

One of Christian's top players is senior Jim Warsinski, a pitcher-infielder. He missed last season because of an injury, but led the team in batting with a .340 mark as a sophomore.

"We expect a lot from him," Newman said. "He's never pitched before, but he can throw BBs. I just hope he has some control. He's also an excellent infielder and a good hitter."

Other key players are senior Kevin Edwards, a pitcher-outfielder; Junior Bryan Wilson, a first baseman; and sophomore Rob Vosler, a pitcher-infielder.

"We don't play in a league, so one of our goals is to make it to the finals of the district tournament," Newman said. "We've never won a district game."



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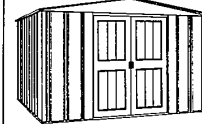
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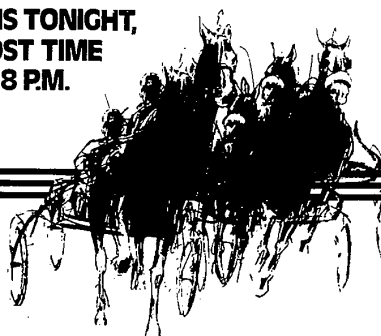
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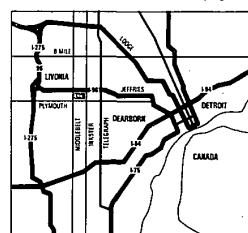


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